Social Justice and The Few

An Address to the Melbourne Jewish Undergraduates' Society, 26th October, 1913, by L. P. JACOBS.

"That which is altogether just shalt thou follow."

(DEUTERONOMY xvi. 20.)

That justice is the highest quality in the moral hierarchy I do not say; but that it is the first. That which is above justice must be based on justice, and include justice, and be reached through justice. It is not by accident that, in the Hebraic religious development which through Christianity we have inherited, the declaration, "The Lord thy God is a just God," precedes the sweeter revelation of a God of Love. Until the eternal justice is perceived, the eternal love must be hidden. As the individual must be just before he can be truly generous, so must human society be based upon justice before it can be based on benevolence.—*Henry George.*

SIGNS are not wanting that the germ of the idea underlying the fuller conception of a Messianic Age was in existence from the time of the founders of the race of Israel. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" was the promise given both to Abraham and Isaac. It was a promise that reached far beyond the lifetime of each, farther than the limits of the temporal kingdom their descendants founded; that has obtained but partial fulfilment up to our time, and looks for fullest realisation to that future towards which each of us in his measure may contribute his share. . . .

It is to my mind the loftiest idea in the whole doctrine that it is this earth which is to be the scene of a better state of things, and that through human agencies, divinely helped and guided though they be, the Messianic glories are to be achieved.

—REV. S. SINGER on "The Messianic Idea in Judaism." An Address to the Jews' College Literary Society, May, 1887.

THE Association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. . . . It is the riddle which the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilisation, and which not to answer is to be destroyed. . . .

To-day a wider, deeper, more beneficent revolution is brooding, not over one country, but over the world. God's truth impels it, and forces mightier than He has ever before given to man, urge it on. It is no more in the power of vested wrongs to stay it than it is in man's power to stay the sun. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera, and in the ferment of to-day, to him who hath ears to hear, the doom of industrial slavery is sealed. . . .

It is the noblest cause in which any human being can possibly engage. What, after all, is there in life as compared with a struggle like this? One thing, and only one thing, is absolutely certain for every man and woman—that is death. What will it profit us in a few years how much we have left? Is not the noblest and the best use we can make of life to do something to make better and happier the condition of those who come after us, by warring against injustice, by the enlightenment of public opinion, by the doing all that we possibly can do to break up the accursed system that degrades and embitters the lot of so many?

—HENRY GEORGE.

Social Justice and the Jew.

An Address to the Melbourne Jewish Undergraduates' Society on Sunday, 26th October, 1913, *by* Louis P. Jacobs.

I ASK your indulgence if I lead up to the theme to which I am inviting your attention this afternoon, by touching upon a somewhat personal experience. For some years past my interest and sympathies have been engaged in a movement which has come to be known under the uninspiring and somewhat unscientific title of "The Single Tax"—"Not a *Single* Tax"* would more correctly describe it. This movement, of which Henry George was the founder, is generally regarded as being politico-economic in character, but I hope to be able to show that the doctrine it embodies may be more truly regarded as a politico-religious one.

In this part of the world our brilliant co-religionist, the late Max Hirsch—whose friendship it was my high privilege to enjoy—was, by general consent, its most forceful and eloquent exponent. A man of extraordinary intellectual gifts and energy, such as must have brought rich reward in almost any sphere in which they might have been applied, he, while yet in the prime of life—he was then thirty-six years of age—abandoned the commercial career to which he had been trained, and devoted himself exclusively for the remaining twenty years of his life to the furtherance of the ideals of social justice which had captivated his heart and brain.

* Title of a pamphlet on the Single Tax, by C. T. Root.

In the earlier days of the movement in Australia, Hirsch had as ardent fellow-workers two other of our kinsmen—Lewis Berens* and Ignatius Singer, both still living, but for many years resident in England, where their activities in this same movement have continued unabated. Indeed Berens, since he left Australia, has given himself entirely to this work, more especially to the literary side of it, to which he has made notable contributions. Berens, like Hirsch, had been a business man. Singer still is. The President of the Single Tax League of New South Wales—Alderman Savage—is a Jew.

In January, 1911, I went to England. Here again I discovered that, as in America, Germany, and elsewhere, Jews were among the most prominent workers in the cause for which Hirsch, Berens and Singer had laboured in Australia. The founder of the first Single Tax League in New York was a Jew—one Benjamin Doblin. The editor of the *Public*—the organ of the movement in America—is Samuel Danziger, a Jew. Above them all, and indeed the Guardian Angel of the movement throughout the world to-day, is a little American Jewish business man—Joseph Fels, of Philadelphia. Small, and rather delicate in physique, but of dynamic energy, Joseph Fels is liberally endowed with the qualities of heart, head, and imagination, and also—happily for the movement—with fortune, for he is a millionaire. Mr. Fels devotes the greater part of his energies and income to the spreading of the truth, which is at once a passion and a religion with him—viz., that in the proper relation of man to Nature's storehouse—the land—is to be found the key

* Died since this address was delivered. The following obituary notice appeared in the London *Times* of 4th November, 1913 :—

" The death occurred on Sunday, at his residence in Dawson Place, Pembridge Square, of Mr. Lewis H. Berens, for the past eleven years Hon. Treasurer of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, and Hon. Director of the Land Values Publication Department.

" Mr. Berens, who was formerly in business in South Australia, was one of the earliest of those who were influenced by the teachings of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. He founded a society in South Australia to promulgate those teachings, and, on retiring from business at an early age, returned to England, and devoted himself almost entirely to furthering the movement. His little compendium of ' single tax ' doctrine, *The Story of My Dictatorship*, has had a large circulation on both sides of the Atlantic and in Australasia, and has been translated into several languages. Among his larger works were *Toward the Light* (studies in ethics and economics) and a historical monograph on *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth*. He leaves a widow and one son."

to the solution of most of the ills which afflict mankind. To quote from an article entitled " My Christian," in an American paper, written by a Christian minister:—

Undoubtedly the Founder of Christianity was moved by a sense of justice, but the history of the Christian Church in all lands shows vast activities in the fields of charity, but only spasmodic and futile efforts for justice.

All the life and wealth of " My Christian " are spent in trying to remove those artificial barriers that prevent men and women from making the best use of themselves. He believes that the only fundamental help is that which helps people to help themselves.

He has given much time and money in assisting the great democratic revolution that is being accomplished in Great Britain. He is matching his purse against the purse of the world in an attempt to educate cities, states and nations in the science of taxation.

And in one thing at least he is unique in the world to-day—he has worked out a plan by means of which he is an active force in practically all civilised countries. He aims at fundamental things. He believes that first things must be first, and that to transfer taxes from industry to land values is the most important reform in the world to-day.

To help this movement is his life and religion. So, for every dollar that anyone will give for this purpose in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, and Australia, he has agreed to give another dollar.

It is one man matching his wealth against the economic sanity and generosity of the world. It is pretty near the sublime, and when you consider how profoundly a tax on land values alone must change society for the better, is it not apparent that no other man of large wealth is really influencing the world anywhere near so much as Joseph Fels, of Philadelphia and London ?

For now you have his name and generation. My ideal Christian is Joseph Fels : and possibly it is not an accident that, like the first Christian, he is a Jew.*

The prominent part played by my co-religionists in this movement in widely-distant lands—their whole-souled and even passionate devotion to it—interested me. I know and reflect with pride that, directly or indirectly, members of our race have been associated with almost every movement for the advancement of mankind of which the page of history bears record ; and this despite a martyrdom of persecution and oppression, which gives their labours an added glory.

* The sad news of the death of Joseph Fels in his home town, Philadelphia—the birthplace of Henry George—on 3rd February, 1914, reaches Melbourne as this address is on the point of publication. Opportunity is therefore taken to append a few of the many striking articles which Mr. Fels contributed to the cause to which he dedicated the later years of his life.

But there were other features in this philosophy of Henry George which, in a sub-conscious way, appealed to my Jewish sentiment. The very sneers and contempt which—until recently—have been poured upon the doctrine and its advocates were calculated to appeal to the sympathy of a Jew. The emphasis laid by Moses on the question of land tenure ; the fervour and devotion against immense odds, with which the gospel is held ; the spirit of fraternity among its devotees, superseding all ties of barriers or race or creed ; the optimism of the philosophy, pointing as it does to a brighter and better era for mankind ; the belief in the divinity and the dignity of man ; and, above all, the abiding faith in a Beneficent and All-Wise Creator—all these elements have added, as time has gone on, to my interest in the question, and I had frequently wondered whether there might not be a significance in these aspects of harmony between the Jewish and the Georgian vision.

Now let me here make the frank and, I fear, humiliating confession that had I remembered the Bible of my youth, my musings on this point might have taken definite shape sooner than they have done. It was, however, reserved for another to crystallise the speculations which had been floating through my mind, and this by means of an article which I came across a few months ago in that excellent and inexpensive publication, *The Jewish Review* (which everyone interested in current Jewish literary and social questions would be well advised to take) of January, 1911, a number I had missed during my absence from Australia in that year.*

The article is entitled " Social Justice in Ancient Judaism," and is by a Jewish Rabbi of Germany—Dr. Felix Perles, of Konigsberg, translated by Miss Bella Lowy, of London.

Now, I frankly admit, that it was largely from a desire to bring Dr. Perles' notable article before the members of your Society that I was prompted to address you to-day, and, therefore, I trust I will need no apology if I quote freely what appear to me to be its most striking passages. I feel that any summary I might attempt would mar the effect of what he says so well.

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* *The Jewish Review*, edited by Norman Bentwich and Dr. Joseph Hochman. Published bi-monthly ; 7s. 6d. per annum. Routledge and Sons, 68-74, Carter Lane, London, E.C.

Before quoting Dr. Perles, may I give this digest of the references to him and his forbears which appear in the *Jewish Encyclopædia.*

Born at Munich in 1874; son of Joseph Perles, who was a distinguished German Rabbi, a graduate of Breslau University, and author of many works on Biblical and Jewish subjects—a long list of which is given in the *Encyclopædia.*

The son, Felix—the writer of this article—began his Jewish studies under his father. He then studied successively at the University of Munich; the University, as well as the Rabbinical Seminary of Breslau; again, at Munich (receiving the degree of "Ph.D." in 1895); at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Vienna; and at the Seminary at Paris, receiving his Rabbinical Diploma in 1898. He was then called as a Vice-Rabbi to Konigsberg, where apparently he still resides.

He evidently inherited his father's literary tendencies, being the author of a number of works dealing with Biblical Science, Rabbinical Philology, and the Science of Religion.

His grandfather also receives a considerable notice in the *Encyclopædia*:—"Uniting Talmudic Scholarship with deep piety and a blameless life, Perles was one of the first Hungarian Rabbis to comprehend the modern spirit"; and the family of Perles is described as probably "originating in Prague, many members of which have been rabbis and scholars."

What significance then does the descendant of this long line of Biblical and Rabbinical scholars find for us to-day in the Ancient Jewish Scriptures with which his article deals? . . . . . .

It is a well-known fact that the modern Jews, since their admission into the State, have devoted themselves with especial zeal to social duty by unreservedly giving their wealth to the numerous charitable institutions; and they have in every way furthered social advancement by thorough-going theoretical research as much as by practical co-operation. Nevertheless, the reason for their universally acknowledged work is almost always misunderstood or ignored, and people are content to assert that the Jew, who was so long deprived of human rights, shows a natural and not wholly disinterested enthusiasm for those ideas to which he owes his own freedom. His former state of oppression has made his heart soft and accessible to all social wants. No external

impulse was, however, needed, for social justice has always been a characteristic of true Judaism, evinced at various times in varied surroundings and in divers ways, but always as a distinguishing feature of our religion. This characteristic has been acknowledged by many leading thinkers.

Thus, already nineteen hundred years ago, Philo of Alexandria, who desired to prove the excellence of Judaism to educated heathens by showing the contrast between Judaism and heathenism, quoted to this end the social laws of the Bible in one of his writings to the Greeks. " Here you have," he tells them, " the fundamental ideas of Judaism. What can you, from the proud eminence of your culture, set up in comparison with it ? " Philo was certainly the true son of his own age, and acted in harmony with the opinions of his readers when he named his work " On the Love of One's Neighbours." Had he entitled his work " On Justice," his heathen readers would not have understood him. They did not know that justice can mean something higher—a greater truth than that in their own law-books. Philo was, therefore, obliged, if he wished to prove the superiority of Jewish law, to praise its love of man. At the same time, he desired to refute the favourite accusation against the Jews that they hated their fellow-men.

But few of the great social reformers, however, were conscious of treading in the footsteps of Jewish pioneers. *It was reserved for one of the most modern and far-seeing political economists, Henry George, the author of " Progress and Poverty," to show the influence of ancient Judaism on the social education of humanity, and to recognise in Moses a hero whom the world must bless as a true deliverer.** It is inspiriting, but yet humiliating that Henry George, who was not a member of our faith, should see more clearly than any other the greatness of the social law in ancient Judaism, and that he should cite it as an example to be copied even in the present day. While, as I say, it puts us to shame that just a non-Jew should be the first to recognise the full import of the ancient Jewish social laws, it is a saddening fact that a great number of modern Jews actually know nothing of those laws of their own ancestors. The very Jews who work unceasingly in all social tasks, and thereby feel themselves to be essentially modern, perhaps for this very reason refrain from studying the past of their own people. These same Jews are filled with surprise when they learn in a lecture, or read in a pamphlet, or, as probably happens very seldom, when they hear in a sermon that the archives of Judaism have a deep significance for our own times, and not merely for Divine worship, or archæological research. I remember the astonished expression of an official of the congregation, who, after hearing a sermon on the Sabbath and the year of Jubilee, exclaimed: " I should not have thought that the ancient Jews were reformers who were concerned with the land."

It is well known that not only Christian theology, but also the modern science of religion, loves to point the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, and to declare the superiority of the latter, by the formula : The one is a religion of salvation, whilst the other is merely a religion of statutes. This reproach can be lightly treated. For, by the very fact that Judaism is a religion of law, it is also a religion of salvation, not in the mystic sense that man needs a redemption from

* Italics mine.

sin (only to be gained by divine mercy), but in a concrete sense. Judaism wishes to redeem men from unbearable circumstances, partly brought about by their own fault, and from which they can only free themselves by their own exertions ; and to this end a great part of the law is devoted. It is characteristic that Moses, when he first assumed authority, *commenced as a social deliverer of his people long before bringing them any religious message.** As the Scripture says : " He went forth to his brethren and saw their forced labours." By a lucky chain of events he had been reared as an Egyptian Prince instead of as a miserable slave, and had learned the culture and comforts of a royal palace ; yet he was moved first by the slavery of his brethren, who groaned in fetters, and he devoted his life to their delivery. Thus it is significant that the exodus from Egypt, the social emancipation, stands chronologically before the revelation at Sinai. *Freedom is not the result of religious knowledge, but its forerunner.** And what are the most important laws, after the Ten Commandments, according to Biblical conception and according to the most enlightened Bible critics ? They are only social prescriptions. It is important to pay attention to this question, seeing that the Babylonian law-book of Hammurabi, which, with regard to civil and criminal statutes, shows a parallelism with the Pentateuch, is, however, inferior to it in social laws. The first enactment in the so-called Book of the Covenant concerns Israelite slaves. After the deliverance from Egypt and the entry into another country no new system of slavery was promulgated, and the former bondage was not allowed to continue. Freedom of person was to be a fundamental law, as is shown in another passage of the Pentateuch. (Leviticus xxv. 42.) . . . . . .

As if to teach us that the care of the poor is not left to our goodwill alone, but is a matter of duty which we must not evade, there follow precepts on conscientious administration of justice, warnings against giving false witness, bribery, &c. Besides the warnings against following the majority and refraining from justice to the poor, there is a special enactment, no doubt not to be found in any other code, which says : " Thou shalt not favour the poor in his lawsuit." Nothing is so characteristic of the tendency of Jewish law as this warning spirit, which explains the animus of the judges of those days. The pervading tone of the ancient law was so strong that an unfair verdict in favour of the poor might well be feared. In these enactments also regarding right, God was depicted as the highest champion of justice.

Even in the most ancient portions of the social law, therefore, God was always mentioned as the final arbiter of justice. This is no mere chance—no mere formality, but illustrates an important feature of the religion.

Social justice in ancient Judaism was not only one point, but composed the chief part of religious life ; and the more profoundly religious knowledge penetrated, the more weight was laid upon this, until the prophets declared absolutely that *religion and a knowledge of God were identical with social justice.**

It would be necessary to quote all the prophetic teachings in order to adduce the entire evidence from this point of view. But I will only cite one passage from the Prophet Jeremiah, who formulates this

* Italics mine.

thought in a striking manner: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah ix. 23.)

That this passage is the keynote of the Jewish point of view was admitted by no less an authority than Maimonides seven hundred years ago. He declares at the conclusion of his great philosophical work, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, that it is worthy of note that the knowledge of God should not be sought in metaphysical conceptions as to the Being of the Godhead, that it is not adequate to say God is a Unity, incorporeal and incomparable, but that only those attributes of God should be borne in mind which can serve as a guide to man in his actions.

In this idea Maimonides is, on the one hand, in touch with Spinoza, who, in the thirteenth chapter of his theologico-political treatise, treats the passage from Jeremiah in the same spirit; and, on the other hand, he is in accord with Hermann Cohn, who, in his *Ethik des reinen Willens* (p. 380), asserts that "morality alone is the function of this one God of the prophet. If God requires of man that he should know and love Him, He demands that man should practise morality. To love and practise the knowledge of God does not mean here to seek to penetrate into his Nature and Being." . . . . . .

But more important and more drastic than all these detailed laws are the arrangements as to the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, in which we have marvellous preventive institutions for the avoidance of poverty. In every seventh year the earth had to lie entirely fallow; but since, through the cessation of agricultural labour, the poor man might easily fall into distress, he was allowed to have all produce that was growing on the land. At the same time all debts were to be released in that year, and it was expressly stated that loans were not to be refused because the year of release was approaching. What influence this law exercised on practical life can be gathered from the fact that the Hebrew language, which has a number of expressions for various degrees of poverty, has no word for beggar. The lowest grade of social abasement, in which a person is entirely dependent on strangers seems to have been an unknown phenomenon in ancient Israel.

After the Sabbatical year, the most important institution of its kind was the Jubilee year. In every fiftieth year all plots of land sold or mortgaged since the last Jubilee year had to be returned free of charge to the original owner or his heirs. Thus lasting poverty was to be rendered as impossible as the retention of immense landed property by any one person.

At every purchase of land thought had to be given to this ordinance. The purchase money was determined by the number of harvests which could be garnered before the next Jubilee year. *The ground itself, then, was not considered as a proper object of sale, but the fruit of the ground, or rather, the result of man's labour on the soil.** Very striking are the reasons for this. "The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." (Leviticus xxv. 23.) As above stated, just as the freedom of the individual was a fundamental principle of ancient Jewish legislation,

* Italics mine.

we now find *that freedom of the land proclaimed which, on all sides to-day, by Tolstoy as well as by Henry George, is declared to be a fundamental condition of solving social questions.** Buhl rightly remarks on this ordinance of the Jubilee year: "Herein lies the social equality of all Israelites regarding both their personal and their material conditions, for they all stand in a like relation to God."

As has been stated, the prophet in the first place disclaims against the exploitation of the labourer's work by the King. The labourer is called "Rea," which means "next to the King"; then the King as a man must regard the labourer as his equal. Labour was not only safeguarded by the foregoing laws, but stood high in the nation's estimation. This is testified by various proverbial sayings, as also by etymological peculiarities in which the national idea is unconsciously expressed. Thus the same word "Malachah" means both work and also property, one's property being that for which one has worked. Similarly, the verbs "kanah" and "asah" which originally meant "to work," were afterwards used for "to earn." One may compare the remark of Henry George: "'To make,' in the sense of 'to earn,' is literally correct from a political economic standpoint. To earn is to make." (*Progress and Poverty.*)

We have not yet considered the question—When did the legislation of Deuteronomy so pass into the consciousness of the people that the great principles of social justice became the inalienable possession of the whole race? This occurred only when the nation was brought to a knowledge of its sin by the terrible disaster of the exile in Babylon, when forgotten duties were remembered and recognised. Torn from their native land and thrown amongst a people of a strange religion and customs, the Jews soon perceived the superiority of their own laws. In a country in which social contrasts were so sharply defined as in Babylon, they first appreciated the meaning of social justice, and their hearts sympathised with the sorrows of those whom fate has disinherited. . . . . .

The great religious reforms initiated by Ezra and Nehemiah at length resulted in a definite Constitution for the Jews, containing stringent social ordinances. . . . . .

At last there was to be realised what neither prophetic admonitions nor legal ordinances have been able to effect—namely, a Jewish community in which all were free, and had no leader but God. This community had monotheism for its foundation, and social justice for its ultimate aim. . . . . .

Through this victory of justice universal peace would reign, and enmity would cease between man and man and between nation and nation. "They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah xi. 4.)

This hope of a future union between man and nations under the ægis of social justice, this unalterable faith in the everlasting progress of man, has proved even unto the present day the strongest force known to history. The Jewish nation from earliest antiquity has spread such teachings by word and deed, and has maintained them unswervingly in opposition to the whole world, and when feelings of right seemed to have died out. Every injustice, every act of oppression confirmed the Jew in his belief in his glorious future, and filled him with noble pride.

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* Italics mine.

Now, the inspiration and confirmation which Dr. Perles, as a Jew and a Georgian, clearly derives from these Biblical dicta are, first, the insistence on Justice as the supreme principle which should govern the relations of men ; and, secondly, the emphasis laid by Moses on the necessity of a wise disposition of the source from which and on which men have there being—the land—as a fundamental condition of establishing these just relations. I will endeavour to show, directly, that these two postulates constitute the whole Georgian philosophy in a nutshell.

Let me say at once that I have no intention here of entering upon the controversial question as to whether Moses ante-dated the exact Georgian idea of the method of land legislation. To those desirous of investigating this question—which should have a special interest for Jews, irrespective of their political or economic line of thought—I would commend a recent little work by Fredk. Verinder, *My Neighbour's Landmark*, which I am sure they will find both illuminating and inspiring.

For my present purpose it will suffice to show the interpretation Henry George himself put upon the Mosaic polity. I quote from an address on " Moses," given before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of San Francisco, June, 1877, which presented a glowing panegyric on the genius and wisdom of the great law-giver. It created such an impression—so relates George's biographer—that at its close Dr. Elkan Cohen, Rabbi of the Temple Emanuel, turned to the Chairman of the Lecture Committee and said with deep feeling : " Where did you find that man ? " George was at this time thirty-eight years old.

> Trace to their root the causes that are thus producing want in the midst of plenty, ignorance in the midst of intelligence, aristocracy in democracy, weakness in strength—that are giving to our civilisation a one-sided and unstable development, and you will find something which this Hebrew statesman three thousand years ago perceived and guarded against. Moses saw that the real cause of the enslavement of the masses of Egypt was, what has everywhere produced enslavement, the possession by a class of the land upon which and from which the whole people must live. He saw that to permit in land the same unqualified private ownership that by natural right attaches to the things produced by labour would be inevitably to separate the people into the very rich and the very poor, inevitably to enslave labour—to make the few masters of the many, no matter what the political forms—to bring vice and degradation, no matter what the religion.

And with the foresight of the philosophic statesman who legislates not for the need of the day, but for all the future, he sought, in ways suited to his time and conditions, to guard against this error. Everywhere in the Mosaic institutions is the land treated as the gift of the Creator to His common creatures, which no one has the right to monopolise. Everywhere it is not your estate, or your property, not the land which you bought, or the land which you conquered, but "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"—"the land which the Lord lendeth thee." And by practical legislation, by regulations to which he gave the highest sanctions, he tried to guard against the wrong that converted ancient civilisations into despotism—the wrong that in after-centuries ate out the heart of Rome, that produced the imbruting serfdom of Poland and the gaunt misery of Ireland, the wrong that is to-day crowding families into single rooms and filling our new States with tramps. He not only provided for the fair division of the land among the people, and for making it fallow and common every seventh year, but by the institution of the Jubilee he provided for a redistribution of the land every fifty years, and made monopoly impossible.

I do not say that these institutions were, for their ultimate purpose, the very best that might even then have been devised, for Moses had to work—as all great constructive statesmen have to work—with the tools that came to his hand, and upon materials as he found them. *Still less do I mean to say that forms suitable for that time and people are suitable for every time and people. I ask not veneration of the form, but recognition of the spirit.**

What, then, briefly stated, was the message of Henry George which is to-day drawing under its banner such ardent and growing bands of men of every faith and race throughout the civilised world? The simple proposition that the Earth, like the air, sun, and water, is the gift of God to all men present and to be, to which each has an equal right for his sustenance, use, and enjoyment. How do we know that each has this equal right? Because, without the use of the earth no human being could exist, and as it is impossible to think otherwise than that each has an equal right to existence, it follows that each has an equal right to the use of the earth. Therefore, the granting of ownership of land to any individual is an unjustifiable breach of the moral law. Similarly, deductions by way of tax or otherwise from the result of man's labour are likewise an infraction of the moral right of the labourer to the product of his labour. In other words, the land is held "in usufruct" by the community, and in trust for the generations of men born and unborn. Wealth in every case results from the application of man's labour to land, and belongs inviolably to the individual who created it. Man did not create the earth—God created it; therefore no

* Italics mine.

man-made law can justly make it man's. What a man produces belongs wholly to him; *his labour is his title deed.* Is it, then, necessary that each should have an equal portion of land in order that the rights of all may be secured? Not at all. That end may be accomplished by taking the value of land which arises from the existence of organised society, and which crystallises itself in the form of rent, for communal purposes. But here let George himself speak. He is discussing that remarkable body of intellectuals, the Physiocrats, who just prior to the great French Revolution had developed almost this identical plan, and to which they gave the French synonym of the Single Tax—"L'Impot Unique."—I quote from pp. 149-150 of George's *Science of Political Economy.*

> Those men saw what has often been forgotten amid the complexities of a high civilisation, but is yet as clear as the sun at noonday to whoever considers first principles. They saw that there is but one source on which men can draw for all their material needs—land; and that there is but one means by which land can be made to yield their desires—labour. All real wealth, they therefore saw, all that constitutes or can constitute any part of the wealth of society as a whole, or of the wealth of the nations, is the result of the application of labour to land.
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> They not only grasped this first principle—from which any true economy, even that of a savage tribe, or an isolated individual, must start—but they had grasped the central principle of a true political economy. This is the principle that in the natural growth of the social organism into which men are integrated in society there is developed a fund which is the natural provision for the natural needs of that organism—a fund which is not merely sufficient for all material wants of society, and may be taken for that purpose, its intended destination, without depriving the unit of anything rightfully his, but which *must be so taken to prevent the gravest injury to individuals and the direct disasters to the State.**

Now, strange to say, it was reserved to another son of Israel—David Ricardo, a wealthy member of the London Stock Exchange—early in the 19th century, to explain the nature of this "fund," the precise significance of which the Physiocrats missed, and to elucidate the true law of rent, as not being casual like the profits on shares or the products of labour, but a fund that must in settled communities come into existence, and vary in exact proportion as any piece of land is superior in site or productivity to the best piece available for nothing.

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* Italics mine.

This, roughly and briefly put, is the well-known " Ricardian Law of Rent," used and acknowledged by George in his thesis, and accepted to-day by practically all political economists. But to return for a moment to the question whether the private ownership of land—which, of course, is *synonymous with the private ownership of the rent of the land*—is in accordance with moral, that is with God's, law, permit me to support what has so far been submitted as the Biblical view by quoting the opinions of a very few, out of many, of the eminent latter-day writers who have, explicitly or implicitly, condemned the private appropriation of the earth's surface :—

Thomas Carlyle :—

The land is the mother of us all ; nourishes, shelters, gladdens, lovingly enriches us all ; in how many ways, from our first awakening to our last sleep on her blessed mother-bosom, does she, as with blessed mother-arms, enfold us all ! . . . . Men talk of " selling " land . . . . Who can or could sell it to us ? Properly speaking, the land belongs to these two : To the Almighty God, and to all His children of men that have worked well on it, or that shall ever work well on it. No generation of men can or could, with never such solemnity and effort, sell land on any other principle ; it is not the property of any generation, we say, but that of all the past generations that have worked on it, and of all the future ones that shall work on it.

Herbert Spencer :—

Equity, therefore, does not permit property in land. For if one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, and may be held by him for his sole use and benefit, as a thing to which he has an exclusive right, then other portions of the earth's surface may be so held ; and eventually the whole of the earth's surface may be so held ; and our planet may thus lapse altogether into private hands. Observe now the dilemma to which this leads. Supposing the entire habitable globe to be so enclosed, it follows that if the land-owners have a valid right to its surface, all who are not land-owners have no right at all to its surface. Hence, such can exist on the earth by sufferance only. They are all trespassers. Save by the permission of the lords of the soil, they can have no room for the soles of their feet. Nay, should the others think fit to deny them a resting-place, these landless men might equitably be expelled from the earth altogether. If, then, the assumption that land can be held as property involves that the whole globe may become the private domain of a part of its inhabitants, and if, by consequence the rest of its inhabitants can exercise their faculties—can then exist even—only by consent of the land-owners, it is manifest that an exclusive possession of the soil necessitates an infringement of the law of equal freedom. For men who cannot " live and move and have their being " without the leave of others cannot be equally free with those others.

" But Time," say some, " is a great legaliser. Immemorial

possession must be taken to constitute a legitimate claim. That which has been held from age to age as private property, and has been bought and sold as such, must now be considered as irrevocably belonging to individuals." To which proposition a willing assent shall be given when its propounders can assign it a definite meaning. To do this, however, they must find satisfactory answers to such questions as—How long does it take for what was originally a wrong to grow into a right ? At what rate per annum do invalid claims become valid ? If a title gets perfect in a thousand years, how much more than perfect will it be in two thousand years ? And so forth. For the solution of which they will require a new calculus.

Spencer wrote thus in 1851 in his *Social Statics*. Forty years later, when his worldly and social position had greatly improved, and he found Henry George pushing this theory to its logical conclusions, he published a recantation. But let anyone who wishes to examine the validity of his later with his earlier position, read George's work, *A Perplexed Philosopher*, and I will be surprised if he does not rise from its perusal with as great an admiration for George's power of logic, critical analysis, and philippic, as he will feel contempt for his victim's lack of courage in declining to face the consequences of his earlier reasoning. The book, too, is a dialectic treat, and the contrast in the views of the two men on the subject of a Divine Purpose is of special interest to a Jew.

Ruskin—in *Time and Tide :*

Bodies of men and women, then (and much more, as I have said before, their souls), must not be bought or sold. Neither must land, nor water, nor air, these things being the necessary sustenance of men's bodies and souls.

—And again in *Munera Pulveris :*

It is nevertheless the nearest task of our day to discover how far original theft may be justly encountered by reactionary theft, or whether reactionary theft be, indeed, theft at all ; and farther, what, excluding either original or corrective theft, are the just conditions of the possession of land.

Emerson—in *On the Times :*

Grimly the same spirit (of progress) looks into the law of property, and accuses men of driving a trade in the great, boundless Providence which has given the air, the water, and the land to men to use, and not to fence in and monopolise.

Cobden—writing to Mr. John Bright from Midhurst :

I agree with you to the letter in all you say about Ireland. There is no doubt that the land question (coupled with the Church Establishment) is at the root of the evil. And here let me say that I go heartily with you in the determination to attack the land monopoly root and

branch both here and in Ireland and Scotland. Wherever the deductions of political economy lead, I am prepared to follow. . . . . And it is, I confess, on this class of question rather than on plans of organised reform that I feel disposed to act the part of a pioneer.

John Stuart Mill—in his *Political Economy :*

No man made the land ; it is the original inheritance of the whole species.

The essential principle of property being to assure to all persons that they have produced by their labour, and accumulated by their abstinence, this principle cannot apply to what is not the product of labour, the raw material of the earth.

Tolstoy, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, in reply to an address from the United Single Tax League of Australia, compiled by Max Hirsch (Tolstoy had been for years an ardent follower of Henry George), wrote as follows :

Dear Friends—To my regret, I have done too little for the cause so dear to you and me, which unites us. Of late I have been thinking more and more about it, and should I yet be afforded power for work, I will endeavour to impress the teaching of Henry George, who has as yet been far from appreciated according to his merits, as clearly, as briefly, and as accessibly to the great mass of land workers as possible.

This problem insistently demands its solution, because the supposed right of landed property now lies at the foundation not only of economic misery, but also of political disorder, and, above all, of the degradation of the people.

Max Nordau—in *Degeneration :*

Tolstoy has rightly discerned the evils which follow the uprooting of the people from fostering Mother Earth, and the incubation of a day-wage-earning, urban, industrial proletariat.

Sir Frederick Pollock—in his *Land Laws :*

It is commonly supposed that land belongs to its owner in the same sense as money or a watch ; this has not been the theory of the English law since the Norman Conquest, nor has it been so in its fullest significance at any time. No absolute ownership of land is recognised by our law-books except in the Crown. All lands are supposed to be held immediately or mediately of the Crown, though no rent or services may be payable and no grant from the Crown on record.

Lord Chief Justice Coleridge—in an address to the Scottish Judicial Society in 1887, speaking with reference to the Land Laws of the United Kingdom, is reported as follows :

These may be for the general advantage, and if they can be shown to be so, by all means they should be maintained ; but if not, does any man with anything he is pleased to call his mind deny that the state of law under which mischief can exist, under which the country itself

would exist, not for its people, but for a mere handful of them, ought to be instantly and absolutely set aside ?

Chief Justice of the Commonwealth High Court, Sir Samuel Griffith. The last reference is to an authority still more familiar to Australians—none other than the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth High Court, Sir Samuel Griffith—to whose " genius and influence " (writes Max Hirsch in his posthumous work, *Land Values Taxation in Practice*) " is principally due the adoption of rating on the unimproved value of land in Queensland. How clearly he had apprehended the principles which support the demand for concentrating taxation upon the value of the land, and leaving undiminished in the hands of each individual the values arising from his individual services, may be seen from the Bill to declare the natural law relating to the acquisition and ownership of private property which he introduced into the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

This Bill, entitled " The Elementary Property Law of Queensland," drafted by Sir Samuel Griffith in 1890, read for the first time, but not proceeded with, contained *inter alia*, the following " First Principles," viz. :—

All persons are by natural law equally entitled to the right of life and to the right of freedom for the exercise of their faculties ; and no other person has by natural law any right superior to the right of any other person in this respect.

The right to take advantage of natural forces belongs equally to all members of the community.

Land is by natural law the common property of the community.

All property, other than land, is the product of labour.

If I seem to have laboured this point as to the ethical right of the community to the land—and the term " land " in economics means *all the fluid and solid forces of Nature*—it is because this is the fundamental basis—the keystone—of the whole Georgian theory, and because we know and feel that, unless the claim is founded on the solid rock of Justice, it not only will fail, but deserves to fail. I cannot emphasise too strongly that it is by this test we of the Georgian faith are prepared to stand or fall. But, it may be said, assuming that a mistake was made in having set up the present system of private ownership of land, the hard fact remains that here the system is. Vested interests have grown up under it. How can you without injustice get back to the *status quo ante;* and even if you can, how would your doing so bring about the great social

amelioration and uplift which provide at once the aim and inspiration of your cult? Let me try, within the necessarily brief limits of this paper, to answer the last question first.

If land is communal property, it necessarily follows that the rent of the land is communal property, and this communally created fund would be taken to defray the cost of communal services, leaving untaxed and "undiminished in the hands of each individual the values arising from his individual services" or labour. Think what this would mean. Instead of a man having to pay rent to the privileged few landowners—in most cases artificially enhanced owing to such enormous quantities of land, urban and rural, being held out of use or under-utilised—he would not only in most cases pay a smaller contribution for this privilege of using or occupying such land as he required, but he would be freed from all other taxation—notably Customs Duties and Rates on Houses and Improvements—which to-day make such a serious deduction from his earnings, and which here in Australia, by increasing the cost of living, make the nominally high wage-rate such a mockery and delusion. But it is in the indirect and hidden, rather than in the direct and obvious, effects of the changed system that the greatest benefits would arise. First, it would set in operation an economic force which would cause idle or inadequately used land—and in the earlier stages the best and most accessible—to be cultivated or built upon. If every landowner had to pay a tax according to its full value, and not according to the use or misuse to which he puts his land, he would, perforce, have to put it to its full use or part with it to one who would. Secondly, it would involve such a cheapening in the cost of production that an enormous stimulus would be given to the creation of wealth—that is, commodities, houses, machinery, factories, railways, money, and so forth. This in its train would cause an *increased demand for labour and skill* of all kinds. Wages would thus be maintained at a high level, and with the abolition of taxes now levied on the necessaries of life, the cost of living would be much reduced. Thus the working class, who form the base of the social structure, would secure a double advantage instead of being under a double disadvantage, as we hold is the position to-day. Critics of our theory are ready enough to speak of the "vested rights" of the comparatively few landowners.

If our claim is founded on justice, what is to be said of the "*vested wrongs*" of the many?

Put another way, the Single Tax would abolish the special privilege which a comparatively few men in every country possess by reason of their ownership of favoured sites or sections of our Mother Earth, or by reason of tariff benefits. Equal opportunity would be opened up to all, with complete freedom from taxation other than a payment for the superior value of land occupied, all men willing to work would get *in fact*, and not, as to-day, only *in name*, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. What I mean by "in fact" is that the buying power of the sovereign would be greatly increased by reason of greatly reduced rent and cost of commodities. Why is it, think you, that even in this fair young land of ours, with its vast territory and boundless possibilities of production and population, we already have the Old World slum problem rearing its ugly head? Why is it that here in Victoria we have nearly half the population centred in Melbourne—and the latest statistics show that the tendency is steadily increasing—while rural settlement and development lag woefully? South of our Dividing Range we have a territory—never yet striken with drought—which could comfortably support a population of five million producers, and yet in this region, so accessible to markets and well served by railways, development proceeds at a snail's pace. Such agrarian development as is taking place is mostly confined to the far distant parts of the State, such as the Mallee, Eastern Gippsland, &c. What is the reason for this lop-sided development? Do you believe that town-planning and minimum allotment schemes will even touch the slum problem, or that State land purchase, agricultural education, co-operation, railway development, or irrigation, or all together, will solve the vital and related questions of rural settlement and city congestion? Some of these measures may be useful and desirable auxiliaries. Their fatal weakness is that they are not fundamental—they do not go to the root of things. Make the most desirable land *within easy access of market and of the amenities of life obtainable on a payable basis*. Remove from the farmer's back the heavy burden of taxation he has to bear through Customs Duties and rates on all his improvements. Reduce the cost of rent of the city worker's home; take the taxes off his food and clothing; make his 20s. really worth

20s., and not 16s., as it is to-day. The taxation of land values in lieu of present taxes will do all these things as surely as night follows day—not only in Australia, but in every land in which these evils cast their shadow. These results, we assert as confidently as you would posit the law of gravitation, would flow from the application of the simple Georgian method known as the " Single Tax," but which in essence is not a tax at all, but the communalisation of rent. But faith in these economic or fiscal results—all-important as they are—does not by any means account for the fire which burns in the breast of every true Georgian, or for the tenacity with which, through good or ill report, he holds to his creed—a tenacity which has impressed me as peculiarly like that of the Jew to his creed. The inspiration behind the Single Tax movement resides in the profound conviction that, through this economic amelioration, through this widening of opportunity, by the juster distribution of wealth and the greater diffusion of population throughout this and every other country—and by these agencies alone—can the hydra-headed social problem be hopefully and successfully attacked, and the road be cleared for that higher and happier civilisation of which the Prophets have sung, and for which ministers of religion, statesmen, and philanthropists are labouring so painfully. The soil must be sweet if the plant is to flourish and bloom. *The physical basis must be sound, if the moral and spiritual life is to issue from it.* Can any thoughtful student of social conditions, even in this richly favoured Australia, with its handful of people, say of it that " the physical basis " is sound ?

Admitting the comparative prosperity of recent years, is all well with us ? Ask any of our manifold charitable agencies whether, in the midst of all this growing wealth and prosperity, they are not called upon to cope with an amount of poverty, disease and misery which strains their utmost resources ? Why have we an Anti-Slum League in this great rich young city, and an Anti-Slum Commission sitting at the present moment ? Why are men and women banished to the tragic solitude and monotony of the wilderness, while there are hundreds of thousands of fertile acres near our cities unoccupied and uncultivated ? Is it a wholesome thing in a vast young unsettled country like ours to have such formidable hosts of women crowding our city factories ; of men and women, both in town and country, unable or

unwilling to fulfil at the early age indicated by Nature in this sub-tropical clime, their normal destiny—marriage—and thus enrich their own lives and that of the community by rearing large and happy families ? Ask any minister of religion or student of sociology what a world of moral, social, and physical misery would be dissipated if this problem alone could be solved. Charity cannot do it ; the Church or the Synagogue cannot do it ; education —parental or institutional—cannot do it. Make the economic conditions and the environment really favourable, and we have sufficient faith in average human nature to believe that this grave social problem—for it is a very grave one—will, along with most others, have a tendency to right itself. And if this holds true of social ills in Australia, what would it mean for the older countries of the world, where the pressure, the grinding poverty and the resultant evils, are multiplied a hundredfold ?

I have spoken of " vested interests." I know only too well the importance of this aspect of the question, and would much like to address myself to it, but the limits of time render this quite impossible to-day. Let me assure you, however, that the attitude of Single-taxers in this regard is no revolutionary one ; on the contrary, if you will but look into our practical political proposals, you will find them characterised by a spirit of moderation, if not of generosity.

Perhaps I cannot, in a short compass, exemplify this better than by quoting the following sentences by Max Hirsch from a farewell speech in December, 1905, at a dinner given him on the eve of his departure for Europe :

> We are all at the mercy of those who own the earth, or who have received from the Legislature special privileges in the use of indispensable portions of the earth. I am a Single-taxer, and many of my friends are Single-taxers, because we have recognised these facts, and because we cannot see any other way in which this injustice can be removed without undue hardship to the present owners of the land, who are innocent of creating this injustice, than by substituting for the taxation of individually created wealth the taxation of the unimproved value of the land, and the reappropriation by the Government of the special privileges which it has parted with. But I am not a revolutionist ; on the contrary, I believe in gradual evolution. If I were a dictator, having the power to bring the whole Single Tax system into existence to-morrow, I would not dream of exercising that power nor would any other Single-taxer, strongly as we desire that system to be established. For we recognise that fundamental changes

in society brought about suddenly cannot last; that if the laws of the people are very much in advance of their morality, they will be evaded; and we also feel that undue hardship should not be inflicted upon those who benefit by the present system, and who have no responsibility whatever for its existence. *Therefore, we want to see this change come slowly, by small instalments successfully introduced, until after a long time this economic injustice is entirely eradicated.*

Of course, concurrently with the introduction of instalments of land value taxation, of which Hirsch speaks, would come reduction in taxes on labour and industry.

We Single-taxers claim that we are right in our diagnosis, and in our remedy, because our faith has come through the fire of criticism unscathed. The limits of time at my disposal preclude any attempt to present the case systematically or completely; still less to anticipate and reply to the familiar objections which have been urged against our proposition. Suffice it to say that we hold it to be as capable of proof as a proposition of Euclid; that there is a complete answer to every criticism, and we are encouraged by the growing favour with which our basic principle is being adopted throughout the civilised world. Be that, however, as it may, the call to hasten the reign of Social Justice should be an inspiring and compelling one to every man and woman with a true Jewish heart. It is because I feel this to be so that I have tried to arouse your interest in our movement, and to invite you to investigate its validity and merit. Does any thoughtful person deny that there is a social problem—and a grave one? Does any affirm that the vast mass of tragic poverty, with all its dread by-products—disease, drink, crime, immorality, degeneration and the rest—is inevitable? Could any sincere Jew, of all people, affirm this? To do so would be surely to blaspheme the Creator, whom we—the People of the Book—have held up through the ages as a just and beneficent God. What, then, is the solution of this riddle of riddles? Is it Socialism? Is it Protection? Is it Freetrade? If not, what school of Political or Social Science is showing the way to "The Promised Land." And if none, what are we Jews of Australia doing towards helping to find it and enforce it?

Professor Huxley, in two of his essays, wrote thus:

In the eighth century B.C., in the heart of a world of idolatrous polytheists, the Hebrew prophets put forth a conception of religion which appears to me to be as wonderful an inspiration of genius as

the art of Phidias or the science of Aristotle. "And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" If any so-called religion takes away from this great saying of Micah (ch. vi. 8), I think it wantonly mutilates, while if it adds thereto I think it obscures the perfect ideal of religion." ("Science and Hebrew Tradition." Professor Huxley's Essays.)

The same philosopher further says:

All that is best in the ethics of the modern world, in so far as it has not grown out of Greek thought or barbarian manhood, is the direct development of the ethics of old Israel. There is no code of legislation, ancient or modern, at once so just and so merciful, so tender to the weak and poor, as the Jewish Law; and if the gospels are to be trusted, Jesus of Nazareth Himself declared that He taught nothing but that which lay, implicitly or explicitly, in the religious and ethical system of his people. ("Agnosticism and Christianity." Professor Huxley's Essays.)

Are we quite sure we are obeying the first of the injunctions contained in Micah's message—"to do justly"; and if we do not even attempt to probe the nature of God's justice, still less to help establish it, are we not derelict in our first and highest duty both as Jews and as men?

I began on a personal note, and, with your permission, will close on one—but this time not on the "first person."

Henry George died on 2nd November, 1897, at the age of 58. His death took place somewhat suddenly while engaged in a contest for the Mayoralty of New York. The internment was private, from his home. From an early hour the day before the body lay in state at the hotel to which it had been removed. "Never for statesman or soldier," wrote one of the newspapers, "was there so remarkable a demonstration of popular feeling. At least 100,000 passed before his bier, and another 100,000 were prevented from doing so only by the impossibility of getting near it. Unconsciously, they vindicated over his dead body the truth of the great idea to which his life was devoted—the brotherhood of man."

Among a number of remarkably eloquent speakers at the funeral, Rabbi Gottheil, of the Temple Emanuel, N.Y., in the course of his tribute, dwelt on the absolute honesty of both George's thoughts and statements.

He went in search of truth, and accepted it as he found it—not fearing to run counter to established opinions held to be fundamental in social order. In the spirit of the old prophets, he would declare the word as it was borne in unto him, and he would speak his message in clear and unmistakable language. . . . . .

Measured by these standards, we may be confident that the life of this brave son of a free and generous nation will be chronicled in its annals in letters of gold. Nay, beyond the limits of his native land his name will be known and respected as one of the hosts of God's servants, who desire to glorify Him in the eyes of men by establishing among men a reign of happiness, justice, and of universal peace.

On the tombstone raised by Henry George's fellow-citizens are inscribed in metal letters these words from his first book—" words to which," says the biographer, " after long years of labour, he bore final testimony with his life " :

" The truth I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. If that could be, it would have been accepted long ago. If that could be, it would never have been obscured. But it will find friends—those who will toil for it ; suffer for it ; if need be, die for it. This is the power of truth."

May I mention here that of all political economists, Henry George is to-day the only one for whom an annual commemoration is held in most of the leading countries of the world. One word more and I have done.

Among the very few who tended Henry George in his closing hours was a co-religionist of ours, one August Lewis, who had been for many years his affectionate friend and admirer. In March of the present year, August Lewis too went to his last rest. At the funeral ceremony one of the two addresses given was by Mr. Lawson Purdy (Chief Commissioner of Taxes of the State of N.Y., and a well-known Single-taxer), from which I quote the following sentences taken from a report in the *Public* of 28th March, 1913 :

For all time the name of August Lewis will be linked with that of Henry George, for on the first page of George's *Science of Political Economy* is inscribed a dedication to August Lewis and Tom L. Johnson, who helped him to the leisure to write his last, and in some respects his greatest, book. The *Science of Political Economy* is a description of the natural order. It is more than a work on political economy or a solution of the problem of poverty, for it explains those economic laws universally true in accordance with which men must order their affairs.

The philosophy and teachings of Henry George profoundly influenced August Lewis for more than one-third of his long life. I hold in my hand the copy of *Progress and Poverty* which came to Lewis as a member of the League for Political Education thirty years ago. As I have turned the leaves of this book I see it is marked by a careful hand, and these intimate markings throw a light on the character of the reader. I find this passage marked :

" ' That alone is wise which is just ; that alone is enduring which is right.' "

————Theological School,

————, ————

Mr. Joseph Fels, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sir—Having read much of you and your many acts of charity and philanthropy, I write to ask for a donation from you for our institution.

It may seem strange that I ask this of one who is not of our faith, yet I have read in some of your speeches that you make no distinction of race, creed, or colour, and that you regard all men as your brothers; that you believe in the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God. Thus you are teaching what our institution teaches, and our school is doing, as best it can with limited means, the work you are trying to do.

We are sadly in need of money. Many young men who wish to enter our school and prepare themselves to teach the Gospel of Christ are without means to pay their board and buy books, and our means are so limited that we cannot help them. These young men, trained in our school to preach the gospel, would, many of them, be fitted to carry the Word to the heathen of foreign lands, and thus be instrumental in dispelling the darkness that reigns among millions of our brethren in other lands.

Can you not help us? What would be a very little to you would be a great deal to us, and might be the means of saving many souls.

Yours respectfully,

——. ——. ————,

Dean.

Rev. ————,

Dean————Theological School.

Dear Sir—Replying to your communication, I am at a loss to know where you have read of my "*acts of charity and philanthropy.*" I am not a philanthropist, and give nothing to charity.

When you say I am not of your "*faith,*" I suppose you mean of your creed. Let me state my faith, and we can see wherein we differ.

I believe in the Fatherhood of God, and therefore in the Brotherhood of Man. By "*Man*" I mean all men. So far, I suppose we agree.

I believe that the Creator freely gave the earth to all of His children that all may have equal rights to its use. Do you agree to that?

I believe that the injunction "*In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread*" necessarily implies "*Thou shalt not eat bread in the sweat of thy brother's brow.*" Do you agree?

I believe that all are violating the divine law who live in idleness on wealth produced by others, since they eat bread in the sweat of their brothers' brows. Do you agree to that?

I believe that no man should have power to take wealth he has not produced or earned unless freely given to him by the producer. Do you agree?

I believe that Brotherhood requires giving an equivalent for every service received from a brother. Do you agree ?

I believe it is blasphemous to assert or insinuate that God has condemned some of His children to hopeless poverty, and to the crimes, want, and misery resulting therefrom, and has at the same time awarded to others lives of ease and luxury without labour. Do you agree ?

I believe that involuntary poverty and involuntary idleness are unnatural, and are due to the denial by some of the right of others to use freely the gifts of God to all. Do you agree ?

Since labour products are needed to sustain life, and since labour must be applied to land in order to produce, I believe that every child comes into life with divine permission to use land without the consent of any other child of God. Do you agree ?

Where men congregate in organised society, land has a value apart from the value of things produced by labour ; as population and industry increase the value of land increases, but the value of labour products does not. That increase in land value is community-made value. Inasmuch as your power to labour is a gift of God, all the wealth produced by your labour is yours, and no man nor collection of men has a right to take any of it from you. Do you agree to that ?

I believe the community-made value of land belongs to the community just as the wealth produced by you belongs to you. Do you agree to that ?

Therefore I believe that the fundamental evil, the great God-denying crime of society, is the iniquitous system under which men are permitted to put into their pockets, confiscate in fact, the community-made values of land, while organised society confiscates for public purposes a part of the wealth created by individuals. Do you agree to that ?

Using a concrete illustration : I own in the city of Philadelphia 11½ acres of land for which I paid $32,500 a few years ago. On account of increase of population and industry in Philadelphia, that land is now worth about $125,000. I have expended no labour or money upon it. So I have done nothing to cause that increase of $92,500 in a few years. My fellow-citizens in Philadelphia created it, and I believe it therefore belongs to them, not to me. I believe that the man-made law which gives to me and other landlords values we have not created is a violation of divine law. I believe that Justice demands that these community-made values be taken by the community for common purposes instead of taxing enterprise and industry. Do you agree ?

That is my creed, my faith, my religion. Do you teach that, or anything like it, in your theological school ? If not, why not ? I have a right to ask, since you have asked me for money. If you agree to my propositions but do not teach them, tell me why. If I am in error, show me in what respect.

I am using all the money I have to teach my creed, my faith, my religion as best I can. I am using it as best I know how to abolish the Hell of civilisation, which is want and fear of want. I am using it to bring in the will of our Father, to establish the Brotherhood of Man by giving each of my brothers an equal opportunity to have and use the gifts of our Father. Am I misusing that money ? If so, why and how ?

If my teaching is wrong, and contrary to true religion, I want to

know it. I take it that if you are not teaching religion in its fullness, you wish to know it. Am I correct ?

What I teach may be criticised as mixing politics with religion, but can I be successfully attacked on that ground ? Politics, in its true meaning, is the science of government. Is government a thing entirely apart from religion or from righteousness ? Is not just government founded upon right doing ?

If my religion is true, if it accords with the basic principles of morality taught by Jesus, how is it possible for your school to teach Christianity when it ignores the science of government ? Or is your school so different from other theological schools that it does teach the fundamental moral principles upon which men associate themselves in organised government ?

Do you question the relation between taxation and righteousness ? Let us see. If government is a natural growth, then surely God's natural law provides food and sustenance for government as that food is needed ; for where in Nature do we find a creature coming into the world without timely provision of natural food for it ? It is in our system of taxation that we find the most emphatic denial of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, because first, in order to meet our common needs, we take from individuals what does not belong to us in common ; second, we permit individuals to take for themselves what does belong to us in common ; and thus, third, under the pretext of taxation for public purposes, we have established a system that permits some men to tax other men for private profit.

Does not that violate the natural, the divine law ? Does it not surely beget wolfish greed on the one hand and gaunt poverty on the other ? Does it not surely breed millionaires on one end of the social scale and tramps on the other end ? Has it not brought into civilisation a hell of which the savage can have no conception ? Could any better system be devised for convincing men that God is the father of a few and the step-father of the many ? Is not that destructive of the sentiment of brotherhood ? With such a condition, how is it possible for men in masses to obey the new commandment *" that ye love one another" ?* What could more surely thrust men apart, what could more surely divide them into warring classes ?

You say that you need money to train young men and fit them *" to carry the Word to the heathen of foreign lands, and thus be instrumental in dispelling the darkness that reigns among millions of our brethren in other lands."* That is a noble purpose. But what message would your school give to these young men to take to the benighted brethren that would stand a fire of questions from an intelligent heathen ? Suppose, for example, your school sends to some pagan country an intelligent young man who delivers his message ; and suppose an intelligent man in the audience asks these questions :

> " You come from America, where your religion has been taught for about 400 years, where every small village has one of your churches, and the great cities have scores upon scores. Do all the people attend these churches ? Do your countrymen generally practise what you preach to us ? Does even a considerable minority practise it ? Are your laws consistent with or contrary to the religion you preach to us ? Are your cities clean morally in proportion to the number of churches they contain ? Do your courts administer

justice impartially between man and man, between rich and poor? Is it as easy for a poor man as for a rich one to get his rights in your courts?

"You have great and powerful millionaires. How did they get their money? Have they more influence than the poor in your churches and in your congress, your legislatures and courts? Do they, in dealing with their employees, observe the moral law that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire'? Do they treat their hired labourers as brothers? Do they put children to work who ought to be at play or at school?

"Do your churches protest when the militia is called out during a strike, or do they forget at such times what Jesus said about the use of the sword?

"After four centuries of teaching and preaching of your religion in your country, has crime disappeared or diminished? Have you less use for gaols? Are fewer and fewer of your people driven into mad-houses, and have suicides decreased? Is there a larger proportion of crime among Jews and infidels than among those who profess the Christian Religion?"

What answers would your missionary return to these questions? How would you answer them?

I do not attack Christianity. The foregoing questions are not intended as criticism of the great moral code underlying Christianity, but as criticism of the men who preach but do not practise that code. You may accuse me of "*unbelief*," but that is no answer. If you have any criticism to make of me or any accusation to bring against me, answer the questions first. Give me straight answers, and I will give straight answers to any questions you may put to me. My contention is that the code of morals taught by Jesus is a code of justice, of right living and right doing; that the simple code of morals taught to the fishermen of Galilee by the Carpenter of Nazareth is all-embracing and all-sufficient for our social life.

I shall be glad to contribute to your theological school or to any other that gets down to the bed rock of that social and moral code, accepts it in its fullness, and trains its students to teach and preach it regardless of the raiment, the bank accounts, the social standing or political position of the persons in the pews.

Very truly yours,

JOSEPH FELS.

JOSEPH FELS on PHILANTHROPISTS AND CHARITY.

Joseph Fels received a request for his photograph to be placed in the gallery of philanthropists of the National Memorial of the United States. He declined. His reasons, as given in a letter to the Secretary, R. E. Doan, were as follows :—

I have made no philanthropic gifts. I give nothing to charity. When I have any money to give away I give it to justice.

I do not think it would be fair to the " philanthropists " or to the cause with which I am identified that my picture should be in your gallery.

The men usually called " philanthropists," as a rule, uphold existing injustice, but give money to relieve victims of the wrongs they uphold. One conspicuous example is a man who has given enormous sums to found libraries and to abolish war. I do not wish to be understood as questioning his sincerity, but it is nevertheless true that he is doing all that one man of influence can do to perpetuate the evils he is endeavouring to relieve. He has been, and still is, a staunch upholder of the form of robbery called " protective tariff." He has written, spoken, and given money in behalf of this iniquity. However good his intentions, the fact remains that in supporting international tariffs and in opposing free trade, he is doing more to perpetuate national hatred and jealousies than all his contributions to peace funds can begin to destroy. Besides the tariff, he upholds other predatory institutions, which impoverish the people and debar them from opportunities for education, which none of his libraries can supply.

This man is typical of all so-called " philanthropists." The most prominent supporters of charitable institutions in our cities are men who bitterly oppose abolition of wrongs that create poverty. There are philanthropists who denounce employers of labour for paying low wages ; who point accusingly at owners of department stores, blaming them for white slavery ; who denounce owners of unsanitary tenements, who rave about political corruption and demand legislation forbidding every evil under the sun, but who will not lift a finger to help remove the fundamental cause of these evils.

While denouncing employers who pay low wages, they shut their eyes to the fact that they themselves uphold conditions which force labourers to choose between low wages or none at all. While denouncing tenement owners, they refuse to consider that taxation of industry and legal encouragement of land speculation make tenement evils inevitable. While denouncing political corruption and demanding futile prohibitory laws, they uphold the wrongs which create poverty and drive men to get a living from corruption or other evils in preference to starvation or beggary.

These philanthropists may well be described as men who give money to repair a little of the harm they have themselves helped to do, or, as Tolstoy has well stated: "men willing to do anything to help the poor except to get off their backs."

Identified as I am with the great movement to remove the cause of poverty, it would be a mistake to classify me with those opposing our efforts, and who would apparently prefer that all they decry should exist for ever rather than that the cause of them should be disturbed.

Replying to a letter to Mr. Joseph Fels from a sanatorium for consumptives at Philadelphia, for contributions, the Fels Fund Commission of the United States made the following characteristic reply:—

Mr. Fels contributes no money to charity. He knows that neither your charity nor any other can do more than temporarily relieve a few individual cases of distress. He knows that what the poor need most is not alms, but a change in social conditions which will make alms-giving unnecessary. It is to help in bringing about such a change that he is giving whatever he can spare to the abrogation of monopoly and special privilege.

In the case of your own special charity, you are trying to keep up an institution for the care of indigent diseased people. You certainly must know that the conditions under which the poor live and work inevitably breed both consumption and poverty.

You must know that a social system which so restricts opportunities for employment that thousands gladly accept a chance to work amidst the most unhealthy surroundings, under the most harmful conditions, inevitably produces consumptives by the thousands. You must know that a system which places a premium on the withholding of valuable land from use must bring about the overcrowding of millions into disease-breeding tenements. You know this, and yet imagine that, when you announce your readiness to care for fifty victims of this outrageous system, your duty is done.

It does not seem to occur to you that the cause of this evil should be removed, so that the further wholesale production of consumptives may be stopped, and existing consumptives and their near relatives enabled to become self-supporting, so as not to need the aid of institutions like yours.

JOSEPH FELS on DISEASE.

(Letter from Mr. Fels.)

A well-known physician of New York City, Dr. Walter Mendelson, is endeavouring to show his brother physicians that removal of the cause is the principle on which social disease should be treated as well as physical disease. He has sent to each one a stirring letter, which states the case plainly. The letter is one which others besides physicians may read with profit, especially those who imagine that when they contribute to some charity their full duty has been done. Dr. Mendelson's letter is as follows :—

> Dear Sir—About twice every week, year in and year out, I (and you) get appeals for " charity."
>
> The ever-increasing number and variety of these appeals must convince any thinking person that this method of combating a great evil is useless. True, many poor individuals are doubtless relieved, but does not poverty itself stalk as gaunt and as hideous as ever ? Is there less poverty, or is there more to-day in New York, in London, in Paris, Berlin, or Bombay, than there was thirty years ago ?
>
> From my means I can give to about one-hundredth of all the appeals I get. Why give to yours more than to any other ? And would it not be more logical, as well as more just, to appeal rather to those who are the beneficiaries of this social system that makes millionaires on one side and paupers on the other ? They get the benefit, let them pay the cost.
>
> What we need is not pitiable alleviation, but cure ; not " charity," but justice. A cancer poultice may be agreeable to the victim, but slowly and ever beneath it, his vitals are being remorselessly eaten out. To my mind every " charity " —and by that I mean any essential thing that is given a man because his poverty denies it to him—is a mere cancer poultice.
>
> As a physician I would despise myself, and be rightly held contemptible by my colleagues, did I content myself with treating symptoms alone, and never touching the cause. For the whole tendency of scientific modern medicine is to cure by prevention—to go to the root of things—and not merely to dabble with effects.
>
> Yet—think of it !—in not one single one of all the appeals for " charity " that I have received in the past thirty years has there been so much as a hint that poverty is a curable disease of the social body, and that the charitarians, in addition to relieving, were seriously trying to eradicate poverty by going down to its cause ! How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable to the medical mind seems all this ceaseless cry of " Relieve, relieve, relieve ! " untempered by the faintest whisper of " Cure ! "

Now I, and many, many besides, believe with Henry George that poverty can be cured; that it is not a divine institution, but a devilishly infernal one. And because one thousand people will blindly give money for measures merely alleviative where one will give for eradication, therefore shall I devote what money and time I can to means that, to my mind, strike deep down at causes—strike, not at symptoms, but at the disease; and I shall give nothing, or next to nothing, to "charity."

Perhaps you have never seriously considered the philosophy of Henry George? If so, do me the favour to read the first chapter of his *Progress and Poverty*. It will at least give you an outline of a doctrine that has encircled and enriched the world; that has infused new life, and hope, and religion into thousands; that is daily gaining new adherents and losing no old ones; and that is based on reason, on justice, and on brotherly love.

JOSEPH FELS on CLASS PREJUDICE.

Joseph Fels was requested by an editor to state his views regarding anti-Jewish prejudice. His reply is one that applies to all other classes with grievances concerning prejudice, as well as to Jews. It follows :—

By way of reply to yours of the 2nd ultimo, and especially with reference to what you say of the aim of your magazine to break down the barriers of prejudice, &c., I would say that Charlotte Perkins Gilman shows how to deal with prejudice in one of her poems. Therein someone is represented as meeting a prejudice blocking his way. He argues with it, coaxes it, scolds it, threatens it—all to no purpose. The prejudice remains undisturbed. He finally ignores it, and is surprised to find that he walks right through it as though it were not there.

The *American Citizen* is a magazine of protest against prejudice and injustice. To follow Mrs. Gilman's advice means that you confine your protests to injustice alone. When you get rid of that, you will find prejudice gone also.

Prejudice is due to class-feeling. Economic injustice everywhere divides the people into social classes. The greatest beneficiaries of injustice form an aristocracy even where, as in this country, aristocracy is not recognised by law. It is to the interests of aristocracy to encourage each one of the classes below it to look with contempt on whatever classes are below them. As long as they do this they will support the pretensions of aristocracy. Those who are too far down to have anyone financially below them may be encouraged to despise those who differ from them in creed, race, or nationality. People who are conceded the privilege of looking down on someone may be depended upon to concede the superiority of someone else. Prejudice due to such conditions cannot be dispelled by arguments.

To destroy prejudice we must destroy privilege, the foundation of economic injustice and of aristocracy. Among those struggling to abolish it, it has been practically eliminated already. Those Jews who are opposing efforts to abolish privilege are doing more to perpetuate prejudice than all the anti-Semitic agitation in the world. Men like Jacob Schiff, Julius Rosenwald, August Belmont, Simon Guggenheim, and others, may be most estimable persons trying to do good according to their lights, but as long as they decline to participate in the effort to remove the cause of economic injustice, they are helping to prolong anti-Semitism. The late August Lewis, who gave not only money but time and personal effort to help Henry George in his work, and to spread knowledge and understanding of the principles which George made clear, did more to eliminate prejudice than all the so-called philanthropists, supporters of charity, and preachers of abstract morality combined.

Knowing this to be the case, I can see the mistake you make in believing that you can affect prejudice by showing what Haym Salomon did or how patriotic other Jews were at different times, or how useful they were in financing the expedition of Columbus. No one will care to dispute those statements, not even the prejudiced ones.

If it were possible to bring forward proof of a claim that George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and every other possessor of a revered name in American history were Jews, and members in good standing of orthodox congregations, it would not affect anti-Jewish prejudice a particle. Every anti-Semite knows that Jesus was a Jew, but he feels none the less prejudiced on that account. It has nothing to do with the case. **Prejudice is not a result of thought, and so cannot be argued away.**

JOSEPH FELS on ANTI-SEMITISM.

Semi-occasionally there is an outbreak of protest registered in the newspapers published in the interests of Jews all over the world. This protest seems to sweep through these newspapers as a more or less stale bit of food for discussion, and the voicing of it does next to no good, so far as I can see, because it suggests no remedy in its presentation to the world.

I would voice the fact that such a protest amounts to little more than waste of so much good ink and paper in the publishing, and the destruction of a certain quantity of grey matter in its composition, having absolutely no effect in reducing the prejudice which is supposed to exist against the Jews, whatever the cause of that prejudice may be.

If the Jews want to eliminate prejudice and injustice, they can do so. But to succeed, they must not confine their efforts to attacking the prejudice and injustice that is directed against themselves only. Let them devote their energies to elimination of economic injustice which is oppressing and crushing Jew and Gentile alike. Let them forget or ignore their own peculiar grievances while doing this work, and they will soon find gone for ever the prejudice indiscriminately directed at them as a class.

In the ranks of those striving to abolish poverty, unreasonable prejudices die a natural death. As Henry George has well stated :

> " The Gospel of Deliverance," let us not forget it ; it is the gospel of love, not hate. He whom it emancipates will know neither Jew nor Gentile, nor Irishman nor Englishman, nor German nor Frenchman, nor European nor American, nor difference of colour or of race, nor animosities of class or of condition. Let us set our feet on old prejudices—let us bury the old hates. There have been " holy alliances " of kings. Let us strive for the " Holy Alliance of the people."

There are many Jews already engaged in spreading the gospel of deliverance, and all know that Henry George truly described its effects on old prejudices and hate. Complaints about prejudice and injustice come only from Jews who have failed to take part in this great work.

Now why are these Jews holding themselves aloof from this movement ? In some cases the reason is lack of information, but in too many instances it is due to prejudice as unreasonable as that concerning which they make so loud a complaint. In other cases the cause is fear lest the establishment of justice cause a loss of unjust profits. These are anxious for justice only so long as it will cost them nothing. Frequently these upholders of injustice to others contribute largely to charity, endeavouring thus to give some slight remuneration to a few victims of the system they help to maintain.

It is now thirty-three years since Henry George showed in *Progress and Poverty* how the institution of land monopoly is impoverishing and oppressing the workers of all countries. He called attention also to a just and simple remedy which has since become known as the "*Single Tax.*" Although many attempts have been made to refute his arguments, none have yet succeeded. The test of thirty-three years ought to be convincing enough to those whose desire to eliminate prejudice and injustice extends beyond the point at which these evils affect them only. If the Jews will help to put in operation the reforms that will destroy the foundation of economic injustice, they will soon find anti-Semitism a thing of the past. Such of them as decline to do so need not complain when they realise that **those who deny justice to others deserve it not for themselves.**

The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1. Reprinted (1931) by Vacher & Sons, Ltd., Westminster House, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1.

That we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us—that we should respect the rights of others as scrupulously as we would have our rights respected—is not a mere counsel of perfection to individuals—but it is the law to which we must conform social institutions and national policy, if we would secure the blessings of abundance and peace.

—Henry George.

We have a long fight and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably, for many of us, we may never see it come to success. But what of that? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle. This we may know, that it is but a part of that great world-wide, long-continued struggle in which the just and the good of every age have been engaged; and that we, in taking part in it, are doing something in our humble way to bring on earth the kingdom of God, to make the conditions of life for those who come afterward, those which we trust will prevail in heaven.

Not capital, but *privilege* is the enemy of labour. . . . Abolish special privileges! Give to all equal access to the inexhaustible storehouse of Nature, and wealth will distribute itself in exact accordance with justice without any interference by Government officials. Equal rights and equal opportunities, through greater freedom—these are the ideals I would place before our people instead of the will-o'-the-wisp of Socialistic despotism.

—Max Hirsch.

What, when our time comes, does it matter whether we have fared daintily or not, whether we have worn soft raiment or not, whether we leave a great fortune or nothing at all, whether we shall have reaped honours or been despised, have been counted learned or ignorant—as compared with how we may have used that talent which has been entrusted to us for the Master's service? What shall it matter, when eyeballs glaze and ears grow dull, if out of the darkness may stretch a hand, and into the silence may come a voice: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

—Henry George.

We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual; and, treating *necessary* monopolies as functions of the State, abolish all restrictions and prohibitions save those required for public health, safety, morals, and convenience.

—HENRY GEORGE.